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CHAPTER XXV

JUSTICE IN GEORGIA

JUSTICE in the mediæval Kingdom of Georgia was based on certain primitive customary laws, combined with later accretions borrowed from the legislative principles of Byzantium and the Islamic world. The right to take personal vengeance for a grievance suffered at the hands of another is the basic principle of justice in most primitive societies. From the conception of this right has arisen the devastating system of blood-feud which persists not only in many parts of Asia, but in Europe, at any rate in Sicily and Albania. In the Black Sea countries neither the Russian nor the Turkish Governments with all their elaborate methods of bureaucratic interference have succeeded in mastering or even controlling the tendency which still persists strongly among the mountaineers of the Caucasus and of Lazistan to resort to blood as the final test of justice between man and man. Philosophically there is much to be said for the solution of injustice by blood, and for blood reprisals for personal injuries; and civilized countries, by legislating against the duel, have certainly gone too far in the reduction of all justice to a matter of hair-splitting arguments and mean damages in the law courts. For certain injuries which one man can inflict upon another are of so intimate a nature that sentiment—and it is in cases where sentiment and not property has suffered—can only be satisfied by blood. Blood satisfaction has, however, in all primitive communities for long generations been reduced to the farce of the blood-feud; whereby if one man kills another, for however good a reason, the relations of the dead man are bound to avenge the death on the killer or on one of his relations, and so indefinitely, until as happens sometimes, in Albania and Lazistan, the males of two contending family groups are almost exterminated; and, moreover, the principle of blood vengeance has reached such a pitch, that if one man kills another by accident the relations of the dead man must still exact retribution for the death. The custom of the blood-feud is still, as we have said, widespread in the mountainous districts of the Caucasus and in Lazistan. But in the relatively ordered state of feudal

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Osseti, in the Mtkvari valley and in Armenia, the principal ⁰⁰⁰ seats of culture during the Bronze Age, particularly in Colchis, have remained unexplored.¹

The animal style—variations of which are characteristic of the Bronze Age, not only in the Ægean and in Iran, but also over the Russian plains—was developed in the Caucasus to a state of high technical value; and the mind which seems to interpret itself in this style—the free and lustful ingenious pagan mind—is the mind of the Caucasians in the pages of Xenophon and Strabo. In the Caucasian Bronze Age there also developed a fine geometrical style, in many respects original to the Caucasus, and with characteristics distinct from the geometrical style of Iran and Mesopotamia which reached its apogee in the early centuries of Islam. This geometrical style with the interlaced and vegetable designs, continued to be a motive of Georgian mediæval art, where it is combined with the Byzantine decorative motives in Georgian ecclesiastical architecture.

With the spread of Hellenic, later Roman, and later Byzantine power round the shores of the Black Sea, the art of the great Mediterranean cultures came to have a direct and overwhelming influence on Georgian art. Christian thought and Christian art came to the Georgians through the magnificent and engulfing channel of the East Christian Church.

The Armenians were original and inventive in architecture, ³⁴⁴ and it has been suggested by Strzygowski and others that ¹⁷⁷ Armenian architecture—rooted in the traditions of the older cultures of Iran, Syria and Mesopotamia—itsself had a fundamental influence on the development of East Christian art. Whatever may have been the interplay of Byzantine, Armenian and Anatolian influences in the evolution of East-Christian architecture between the sixth and twelfth centuries, the Georgians themselves contributed little of originality to the development of East Christian—or of their own local—architecture. At the same time they created many fine interpretations of Byzantine and Armenian architectural conceptions; and it is probable that the Georgians themselves had a definite influence on the spread of Byzantine, and more particularly of Armenian artistic ideas to the Russian principalities.²

The Caucasus is celebrated for its rug-weaving. The ²⁸⁶ most beautiful rugs come from the Muslim parts of Caucasus ¹⁷⁷—from Daghestan, Shirvan and Karabagh and from the

¹ See Chaps. II and V.

² Cf. Dalton, *East Christian Art*, p. 56.

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286 Kazakh district of Georgia. No very ancient examples of
 117 Caucasian rug-weaving exist, but it is certain that the industry
 was developed from remote times. But here again, as
 Georgian architecture is part of East Christian architecture so
 is the Caucasian weaver's art an integral part of Islamic art
 —although the Christian weavers of Armenia, using what
 has come to be an essentially Islamic medium, have acquired
 no little renown.

531 Georgian and Armenian illumination, which achieved a
 177 certain degree of quality, cannot compare with the gorgeous
 workmanship of the Persians, and its technique is an adaptation
 of the Persian manner—including the aged animal style—and
 East Christian ecclesiastical formalism. The little that remains
 of Georgian fresco-painting and mosaic-work is crude copying
 from the Greek masters, but Georgian carving on wood and
 stone, although in the Byzantine tradition, is good work and
 has some originality. It is certainly the equal of the Armenian
 stone-carving which has attained some celebration in Europe.

538 In two spheres of art did the mediæval Georgians achieve
 532 not only quality equal to the best of Byzantium and Persia,
 but creative originality. In epic poetry, the Georgians far
 surpassed the Byzantines; and although comparison is diffi-
 cult and invidious, it may be claimed that the masterpieces of
 Shota Rustaveli and Sargis Tmogveli rival, if they do not
 surpass, the more celebrated works of their Persian contem-
 poraries. And in the metallurgical arts—particularly in their
 own speciality, the metal icon—the Georgians produced
 creations which certainly equalled the products of the Islamic
 and Mediterranean cities of the time.

346 The churches of Georgia in their general design and
 structure may be divided into two principal types, which
 correspond in character to contemporary monuments through-
 out the Byzantine world and Armenia. The more ancient was
 the *centralized* type—the circular or quadrangular chapel, so
 constructed as to direct the gaze of the devout upward to
 the arched dome of the cupola, which with its sacred frescoes
 was to be identified with the vault of heaven. By the sixth
 century the majority of churches were being built in this
 style—which Strzygowski derives from the domed tent of
 the nomad Sace and the fashion of which he attributes to the
 600 influence of Iranian and Armenian ideas. The old Roman
basilica, with its broad nave and impression of deep per-
 spective, was passing. Justinian built his church on the
 Grave of Our Lord in Jerusalem in the new style. It was

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000 followed in the magnificent churches of Syria, at St. Elias of Brusa, at St. George of Salonika and at St. Vitali of Ravenna, at St. Serge and Little Sophia and St. Irene in Byzantium, and it was finally brought to its apogee in St. Sophia.

346 The *centralized* type owed much to the initiation if not
 ● 177 to the invention of the Armenians, and there are many
 531 churches built on this design in Armenia. In Georgia the churches of the *centralized* type which survive are few in number; the best examples are the Church of the Holy Cross at Mtskheta, and the churches of Martvili and Ateni in Mingrelia and Dranda in Abkhazeti. In churches of this type the *cupola* had no *drum*, or the *drum* was only of very stocky dimensions.

Between the tenth and twelfth centuries a more complex structure representing a combination of the *centralized* plan with the older *basilica* had resulted in the development of the *cruciform* conception, in which the intention was to concentrate the gaze of the worshipper round and over the altar. The churches of SS. Andrew and Theotokos in Constantinople, the Catholic and Apostolic Church in Athens and Daphni near Athos, belong to this type. The diameter of the *cupola* was not so great as in the earlier *centralized* style; it had a lesser interlie and for that reason held much more lightly; this latter fact allowed the construction of a taller *drum* which enabled the building to be given a "head". A better proportion was given to the whole *ensemble* and the frontal appearance was greatly improved. In Georgia the majority of churches were built on variations of this latter *cruciform* plan, the most notable examples of which are Kutais Cathedral, and the churches of Mokvi, Bedia, Porta and Pitsunda. The type and plan of these churches belong to the period between the tenth and twelfth centuries, although many of them are of later times, and the reconstruction of some on the ancient model, dates from the seventeenth century. In the churches of the tenth to twelfth centuries, the *ensemble* was more pleasing than in the earlier structures, and the fronts were built higher and were decorated with cornices and carved ornamentations. The whole contrasts in its grace and harmony with the more ancient type, where there is practically no *drum* under the *cupola* or if there is a *drum*, it is of low structure and distinguished by its heaviness and stuntedness.

After the combination of the *centralized* type with the old *basilica* type, the *cupola* was heightened and the *drum*

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346 assumed a greater importance. Separated masses came
 531 into being, the structural joining of which made it possible
 • 177 to evolve from a formless mixture of outbuildings—as in
 St. Sophia of Constantinople—the form of integral beauty
 which is exemplified in St. Sophia of Trebizond and at Gelati
 in Imereti. The high and graceful *cupola* of the Caucasus
 covered often with a *tent* or *bead* (the ancient symbol of
 sanctity) perfected the whole conception of composite har-
 mony. Bedia in Abkhazeti—built in the first decade of
 the eleventh century by King Bagrat III, in honour of
 Our Lady of Blachernæ—with its finely carved walls
 covered with the ancient interlaced design, must have
 been, in its unruined state, one of the finest examples of
 this Georgian interpretation of Byzantine and Armenian
 architectural principles.

Abkhazeti and Samtzhkhé—the Chorokhi country—were
 always favoured by the Bagratid kings as their ancient
 patrimony, and it was in those two regions that the most
 beautiful churches were built during the vigorous days of
 the rising monarchy, when Kartli still lay open to Mussulman
 incursions, and Kakheti was an obscure and independent
 principality. In the heart of Samtzhkhé, along the Chorokhi
 valley and its tributaries, a number of beautiful churches were
 built; such are the ruins of Tbeti in Shavsheti, Yeni Rabat
 (Antonisi) and Opisa, of Khulo in Achara and of Zarzma in
 the valley of the Jaqis-tsqali.

The churches of Samtzhkhé were less influenced by Byzan-
 tine conceptions than those of Abkhazeti. The spreading
 vault of Dranda, Mokvi and Pitsunda in Abkhazeti is met with
 rarely in other parts of Georgia. The church at Mokvi,
 which like that at Dranda bears indications of a later recon-
 struction, had, to begin with, a spreading vault, which in-
 dicates undoubtedly the Byzantine origin of its plan and
 mass. Pitsunda, despite the tradition of its foundation by
 Justinian, belongs to the same period as Mokvi, and, like
 Mokvi, it bears a strong resemblance to the contemporary
 churches of St. Sophia in Kiev and Novgorod.

346 Other churches—as Bedia in Mingrelia and the Meskhan
 531 foundations—although they are in many ways like those of
 Abkhazeti and are of the same period, have already their own
 differences both in plan and construction; there are no altar
 projections and niches appear. The walls are covered with
 carvings showing local originality, braidings and broad con-
 necting lines of crosses and animal figures, hemming round

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346 closely to the decoration of Tbeti and Gelati. This columnar
531 decoration is, of course, essentially Byzantine, but the Cathedral has, nevertheless, its distinct Georgian identity and its characteristic Georgian details, as, for instance, the altar-niche and the interlaced ornamentations.

The great days of Georgian church-building came to an end in the thirteenth century. After the period of the Mongol and Timurid wars, the architectural history of the country is chiefly notable for the ambitious reconstructions of Mtskheta and Sioni by the Kartlian kings. The ancient churches of Abkhazeti fell into ruins and stand half-buried in the forest, and Mongols and Osmanli wrecked the shrines of Samtskhé. Only here and there where a rich feudatory had achieved independence and a temporary prosperity did a new foundation rise beside the humbler church of the domain. Thus in the middle of the fifteenth century the Atabegi Manuchar raised the fine Church of Safar over against Akhaltsikhé, seven thousand feet above the sea. An Armenian architect seems to have built for him, and his craftsmen achieved some exquisite stone-carving and some of the best surviving mural frescoes of the Caucasus. About the middle of the sixteenth century the kings of Kakheti embellished and reconstructed Alaverdi as the Metropolitan See of their precarious kingdom; and the Eristavni of the Aragvi raised the large brick pile of Ananuri—with its elaborate and grotesque carvings of trees, and serpents biting their tails, chained lions and hares. But the kings of Georgia were in extremity and the fount of East Christian art—Byzantium—was choked for ever. No trickle of the influence of Renaissance architecture came through into the closed Pontine lands, and the Baroque, spreading with the commercing of the French and the Italians, penetrated into Anatolia only far enough to be remembered in the bastard mosque of Yuzgad.

341 Separated from the Georgian districts of Lechkhumi and
531 Radsha by passes which are only accessible to the traveller
● 177 from the last half of June to the end of August, Svaneti, in language, in customs and in art, has always been distinguished from the more open parts of Georgia. The tall and slender stone towers, resembling in character the round towers of Ireland, are an individual feature of Svanian architecture and their origin has never been satisfactorily explained. These towers indeed, together with the ancient interlaced design, and in combination with certain physical, psychological and linguistic affinities, have suggested an intangible and mys-

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terious connection between the Iber-ni of the Black Sea and the Hiberni of the Atlantic island—a remote connection which will probably never be scientifically explained, but which nevertheless exists. The geographical isolation of Svaneti preserved always a conservatism in both linguistic and cultural processes, and here remnants of things most anciently Georgian survive. The ecclesiastical architecture of Svaneti affords an example of this cultural conservatism.

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In Svaneti, the *basilica* form of church survived and was developed centuries after the *centralized* and *cruciform* types had become common in Georgia and throughout the East Christian world. The poverty of Svaneti may serve to explain the *basilica* type. The low arched vault employed in the construction of the *basilica* is more simple and easy to build than the *cupola* with its *drum*. Countess Uvarov argues against this explanation on the ground that the frescoes covering the interiors of the Svanian churches and the wealth of icons and sacerdotal plate found therein, the carved doors and iconostases and wrought gates, contradict the assumption of poverty in Svaneti during the great days of the Bagratid Kingdom. But the fact that the frescoes are of later date than the buildings themselves and that they were mostly painted during the days of the Imerian King Giorgi II (1548–85) and his Queen, Tamara Diasamidze, and of their son Alexander, and of King Bagrat IV and his Queen Tamara (1662–80), indicates that Svaneti was specially favoured by royalty during the harryings of Imereti by the Turks, while it is an established fact that much of the wealth in the churches was carried there during troubled times to save it from the sack of the richer churches and monasteries in the south.

The explanation of the striking difference between Georgian and Svanian architecture seems to lie in the poverty and natural conservatism of Svaneti and in the fact that while the *basilicas* of Georgia were destroyed during the Arab wars and later replaced by the newer *centralized* and *cruciform* types, the ancient *basilicas* of Svaneti remained untouched, while the shrines might be repaired but seldom rebuilt.

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Again, it is possible that the *basilica* form in Svaneti developed from those pagan sanctuaries *Khati*, *Nishi*, *Mairemi*, in which the inhabitants of the mountains first began to learn to sing praises to the Christian God. The Church of Nuzala in Osseti and a multitude of small chapels scattered all along

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532 century Christ, and a Virgin attributed by Kondakov to the
 778 tenth century, at the monastery of Khopi in Mingrelia, and
 326 another Virgin dating from the eleventh or twelfth century;
 a Christ of the twelfth century decorated with contemporary
 enamels from the Mingrelian monastery at Kezkheri; and
 the tenth-century Hodigitria at Martvili. The most cele-
 brated of the Gelati icons is the Virgin of Kakhuli, so called
 since it belonged originally to the monastery of Kakhuli
 in the Chorokhi country whence it was removed during the
 Turkish wars of the sixteenth century. The Kakhuli icon
 is a large gold triptych into which are set no less than ninety-
 four enamels, of which seventy are of Byzantine and the
 others of Georgian provenance. The icon itself is attributed
 to the second quarter of the twelfth century, but many of
 the enamels are of older date; namely the plaque of Christ
 crowning the Emperor Michael VII and his wife Maria of
 Alania,¹ and the two crosses bearing inscriptions in honour
 of King Kviriké of Abkhazeti. Diehl compares the Khak-
 huli icon as a technical masterpiece to the Pala d'Oro of St.
 Mark's; and Kondakov states that

"the enamels are notable for precision of design and for the brightness of their colours, in which sky-blue and turquoise blue, tones of violet and purple, and delicate shades of flesh are notable; you see there a self-confidence, a mastery and delicacy in the execution of detail which are only possible when art, having emerged from the period of experiment and uncertainty, has already evolved a set of forms and a perfectly developed ornamentation".²

Less known than the Mingrelian icons are those found in Svaneti, many of which have been published by Countess Uvarov.³ In the Svanian churches are some of the finest survivals of Georgian and Byzantine metallurgical iconography from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, such as the Christ of Zhibiani, the Archangel Gabriel of Lagani and the Archangels Gabriel and Michael of Chukhuli, for the earlier period, and the magnificent Christ of Lagani and the Mother of God of Chukhuli for the fifteenth century.

Icons derive from the portraits of mummies of Hellenistic Egypt executed in *tempera* on wooden panels, first coated with *gesso*, which were laid on the coffins. From the fourth century they began to have a great vogue in the Byzantine

¹ Maria of Alania—or of Abasgia (Abkhazeti). For the discussion of the identity of the Byzantine Empress Maria of Alania see Brossat, who suggests that she was probably no other than Martha, daughter of Bagrat IV (*H. de la G.*, p. 330, note 2).

² Kondakov, *Enamel*, p. 126.

³ Uvarov, *Mat. Kev.*, Vol. X.

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532 world, and the adoration which the icons aroused among
177 the masses of the population led to the great "iconoclastic"
778 struggle within the Empire. With the triumph of the Icono-
326 phils in the ninth century, there was a great revival in the
fashion, and icons of every class were produced, from the
painted wooden panels of the poor to the exquisite achieve-
ments of the jeweller's art which decorated the palaces of the
great.

532 The icon was essentially an artistic medium of the Byzan-
778 tine mind and the Georgians undoubtedly adopted from the
326 Byzantines the cult and the art of the icon. Georgian painted
icons are never of first quality, although they early achieved a
certain humanism which is lacking in Byzantine and con-
temporary painting, and which is exemplified both in some
of the Gelati icons and in the frescoes at Nekresi in Kakheti.
Georgian goldsmiths work is, however, the equal of any
that came from the workshops of Byzantium—where indeed
many Georgians were employed—and Georgian enamel work
is little, if at all, inferior to Byzantine work. The metal-
lurgical arts—which had such a high development in the
Middle Ages—seem to have attracted the genius of the
Georgians, and they attained a degree of technical perfection
which compares with that of Byzantium and Italy, and elevates
them far above the contemporary workers in metallurgy in
Eastern Europe, Russia and Armenia. The chief difference
between Georgian and Byzantine metallurgical iconography
is to be found in the non-representational character of the
Georgian work. Byzantine icons generally have a plain
background, although they may have an embossed frame-like
border; the background of Georgian icons is entirely filled
by complicated designs, similar in character to the elaborate
sculptured designs of Georgian churches. These backgrounds
constitute the very special beauty of Georgian icons, and the
combination of this non-representational and geometric art
with the essential elements of East Christian artistic technique
represents a Georgian synthesis of Western and Eastern
conceptions.

Georgian enamels are rather coarse in drawing and less
accurate in finish than the Byzantine examples. The *cloisons*
are more distinct and less neat, and the colour-schemes
are less delicate in tone, although the Georgian enamellers
achieved the eight colours of the Byzantines. The Georgians
excelled particularly in the manufacture of elaborate geometrical
plaques, and here they surpassed the Byzantine workers, the

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532 development of whose process was always limited by their
778 tendency to adhere to representational designs.

326 By the fourteenth century the Georgian icon had already begun to deteriorate, and by the end of the sixteenth century it has lost all artistic value. The influence of Capuchin monks had introduced a certain element of the Italianate, and the icons of this period, as for instance the Virgin of Kavtis-Khevi, were becoming thoroughly bastardized.

• [177] The church plate of the time of the medieval Georgian Kingdom illustrates further both the skill of Georgian craftsmen and the wealth of the Georgian nobles. Byzantine influence was strong, and the finest example of all which survives, the enamelled gold cross in the Svanian church of Matakhvarishi, is attributed by Countess Uvarov to Byzantine workmanship of the twelfth century. Georgian workmanship in reliquaries, cups, plate and crosses was, however, exceedingly fine, and in many pieces, as in the large gold and enamel *bezarpeshni* or drinking spoons (a purely Georgian fashion), the Georgian craftsmen evolved their own interpretation of both Byzantine and Persian decorative motives.

The few of the Georgian bronze church-gates which survive show exquisite workmanship, and like the stone-sculptures and the carved wooden gates which are preserved at Mghvimé Monastery, in the Svanian churches, and in the Tiflis Museum, they are essentially of local inspiration, a Georgian combination of the national decorative designs—such as the interlaced—with Persian and Byzantine elements introduced.

000 Byzantium, before all, was a civilization; secondly, a political Empire. And until the fifteenth century the civilization of the Near Eastern lands was in essentials Byzantine. East Christian art was the expression of the Byzantine mind—a stone the facets of which reflected different lights according to whether the eyes cast upon it were Bulgarian or Armenian, Rumanian or Georgian, Serbian or Russian.

The Byzantines were the creators of painting as a living art, and their pupils were Italy in great degree, the Russian Masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the provincial schools of Greece and Serbia, Bulgaria and Rumania (which though limited in many ways were not without merit), and the Armenians and Georgians. The Balkan schools, in the last decade, have come in for their meed of appreciation from European students, and the material for Greek and Balkan iconography is plentiful. But the Armenian and

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532 an historical, if not an artistic, value. Again the frescoes preserve the only authentic memories of the likenesses of historic figures. The eleventh-century church of Sioni at Ateni in Mingrelia has the family of Ashot the Kuropalatēs, although in this case the frescoes appear to have been painted two hundred years after the subjects were living. The more famous frescoes at Gelati show the likenesses of Bagrat III, Giorgi I, Bagrat IV and his wife Elena and David Aghmashenebeli and Rusudani. The church of Betani in Kartli, which collapsed half a century ago, contained the portraits of Tamara and her father and her son. The churches of Nikortzmindā, Ertatzmindā, Safar and Mghvimé contain the remnants of frescoes some of which appear to be by Greek hands; and at Mtskheta and in the Mingrelian churches there are many portraits of rulers who were living between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. An interesting characteristic of the later frescoes is the indications which are patent of the influence of Italian Renaissance and Persian art—both indifferently apprehended.

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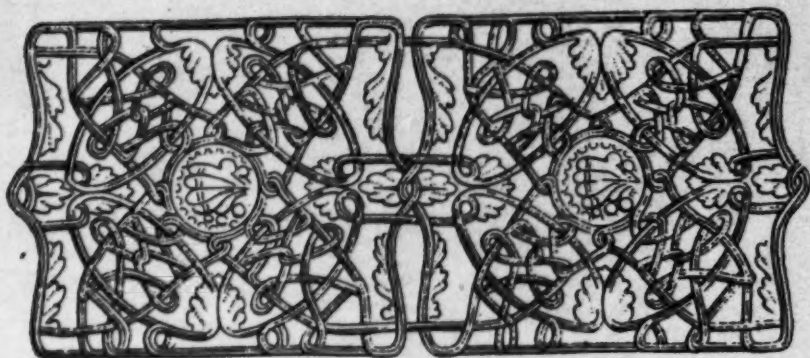
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It was in calligraphy and in the illumination of manuscripts—work giving scope to individual delicacy and skill—that the Georgians excelled. The beautiful Georgian alphabet lent itself to the genius of the calligrapher—work in which the leisurely and child-like mind of the eastern artist delights. From the ninth and tenth centuries the Georgian monks on Mount Athos were engaged with the enthusiasm of the discoverers of a new knowledge in translating the Scriptures and Greek theological and theosophical works into Georgian. Others, returning to Georgia, pursued their work in the Georgian monasteries. The most ancient of the Georgian manuscripts are the Evangel from Adishi in Svaneti—attributed to the end of the ninth century—and the manuscript completed in 940 at the Shatberdi monastery on the Chorokhi and now in the Convent of Djruchi near Sacheri in Mingrelia. The Cathedral of Mtskheta has a tenth-century manuscript of Gregory the Theologian, and for the eleventh century there are various manuscript Evangels, the principal of which are those at Alaverdi—by the hands of the most famous of Georgian calligraphers, the brothers Dvali—and at Gelati. The churches of Svaneti contain a number of Evangels written during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the Gelati Evangel Oriental influences are evident, and various motives from Persian art are introduced. The perspective is bad. There are not less than two hundred and

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forty miniatures. The colours used are blue, red, carmine, ⁵³²
green and violet. A fine miniature from Svaneti of the same ²¹²
period illustrated by Uvarov, shows a much more highly ¹⁷⁷ ●
developed artistic taste and is in the best Byzantine tradition.



CHAPTER XXVIII

GEORGIAN LITERATURE



THE literature of mediæval Georgia occupies a significant place in the history of Middle Eastern culture. It enfolds the divergent elements of two distinctive civilizations. The staid intellectualism of Imperial Christianity was transformed by the Georgians into the simple and ingenuous fidelity of their Church literature. Here was a people to whom the Christian dialectics, already a thousand years old, were interesting and novel, and the monks of Georgia mingle with their translations of Holy Writ and their rehashings of Greek ecclesiastical polemics charming and childish personal biographies of the Fathers of the Georgian Church, whose adventures remain attractive reading, long after their theses and beliefs have turned to dust. At the same time Georgian lay literature—the great poetry of the twelfth century—sparkles with the vibrance of the Persian epics of the time. Nizami was writing in his house in Ganja, when, no more than a hundred miles away, Shota of Rusthavi first saw the light upon the tawny mountains of Samtzhké. The coincidence has meaning. For if Rusthaveli has been compared to Tasso and Ariosto, if he was the creator, almost, of the Georgian language, and the interpreter of his nation, he was at the same time the pupil and the equal of the Classic Persian thinkers. The first and short-lived Renaissance of the twelfth century, which flowered and faded in the west, found expression in the east through the schools of Rusthaveli and Nizami. It was a brief stirring of the human spirit—a false dawn which faded quickly behind the sombre clouding of perpetual arms and of perpetual creeds.

"No one knows my affairs like myself, what embitters me, what sweetens me. The discourse of idle men greatly grieves me. . . ."

wrote Rusthaveli in a world where thought was to remain, for yet five hundred years, a priestly perquisite. And he quoted Plato and lauded the wisdom of China and Persia, so that an archbishop in the eighteenth century was set upon

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burning all the manuscript copies of his work which remained¹⁹⁷
in existence.⁵³⁸

The early importance of Oriental influence in the develop-¹⁷⁷
ment of intellectual life in Georgia is brought out in the study²¹²
of the origin of the Georgian alphabet. The Georgians, in
the Middle Ages, made use of two scripts, the cursive script
called *mkebedruli* or "military" and the ecclesiastical script
called *khuturi*. Considerable controversy ranges round the
origin and relative antiquity of these two scripts. According
to the Georgian Annals, writing was introduced into Georgia,
during the reign of King Farnavazi in the fourth century B.C.
The Annals do not distinguish between the two scripts, but
popular tradition holds that the *mkebedruli* was the older. On
the other hand the ecclesiastical tradition, supported by
Armenian writers, states that the *khuturi* script was introduced
in the fifth century by Mesrop, the inventor of the Armenian
alphabet, and that it was founded on the Armenian.

Now, in the time of Farnavazi, systems of conveying ideas
by making signs to represent phonetical sounds were not rare.
All the peoples with whom the Georgians were in contact—
Persians, Greeks, Syrians and Indians—were becoming accus-
tomed to alphabetical systems of writing. And it seems likely
that in introducing writing, Farnavazi would have followed
the natural course of borrowing from the Persians, since not
only were the Georgians in intimate contact with Persia, but
Farnavazi himself was actually representative of Persian influ-
ence in the country. The Zend script was in the fourth century
B.C. current in Persia; and a comparison of the Zend alphabet
with the Georgian *mkebedruli* script makes it possible to recognize
the equivalents among Georgian letters of no less than twenty-
five out of thirty-five of the letters in the Zend alphabet. Some
of the Zend letters have been incorporated into the Georgian
alphabet without any real change in form; others, while retain-
ing their shape, have changed their position from horizontal
to perpendicular or reverse; others have been changed from
right to left, which is explained by the fact that Zend was
written from right to left, while Georgian, like the Roman
scripts, is written from left to right. Lastly, other letters are
recognizable with the addition or subtraction of lines. The
resemblance between Zend and the Georgian *mkebedruli* script
is, in fact, very strong.¹ And if the derivation of the Georgian

¹ Cf. Khakanov, *Očerki po ist. gruz. slav.*, Vip. II, pp. 14 et seq. For comparisons
of certain Georgian letters with Indian alphabets see Brosset, *Éléments de la langue Géor-
gienne*, pp. 6 et seq. The most recent researches, embodied in Prof. Javakhiashvili's treatise
on Georgian palaeography, have not been available to me.

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- 212 script from Zend is correct, it would appear that the Georgian alphabet was actually introduced about the time of Farnavazi, since the Zend alphabet passed out of use in Persia after the conquest by Alexander of Macedon, and was succeeded by the Pehlevi script of the Arshakids and Sasanids.
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That the Georgians had a script of their own before the alleged introduction of the *khuturi* by Mesrop in the fifth century is borne out by certain references in the Annals. We read, for instance, that King Miriani in the fourth century, before adopting Christianity, endeavoured to inquire into the worth of the new religion, and with this object read many "old and new books—and also the *Book of Nimrod*". The Annals state also that St. Nino, the Illuminator of Georgia, before her death, related the events of her life, and the Princess Salome wrote all down. Prince Murvano, a son of King Waraz-Bakur, is also recorded to have learnt reading so quickly that he astonished his elders.¹

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The Armenian script has little resemblance to the Georgian *khuturi* except in the case of two or three letters, while the *khuturi* resemble the *mkebruli* if they are compared on the basis that the essential of the ecclesiastical script is the straight line, while that of the "military" script is "pot-hooks" and "hangers". Khakhanov suggests that the *khuturi* (Church) script came in after the introduction of Christianity, because it was necessary to wean away the priests and the people from the old pagan script, and also possibly because the straight lines of the *khuturi* were more suitable for the carving of inscriptions in stone. The impetus to the conversion of Georgia came from Armenia, and if the new script was part of ecclesiastical policy, it is very likely that the assistance of a learned Armenian churchman, such as Mesrop, would have been secured.

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The Georgian alphabet is a perfect instrument for rendering the wealth of varied sounds in the language; the letters give each different sound with accuracy and clearness, and no other alphabet, including the Armenian, compares with it in efficiency. It would seem that the alphabet had a long and slow evolution to its present state of perfection, rather than that it was invented whole by a foreigner. Even the powerful cultural instrument of the Greek language has only contributed two letters to the Georgian alphabet ($\omega = \omega$, and ϕ) and the words for "pen" and "ink" to the vocabulary of writing.

¹ Called Peter the Iberian; was Bishop of Gana (413-88); his *Syriac Life* is well known to students; the Georgian *Life* was published by Meier in 1894.

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339 Giorgi Mtatzmindeli ("of Holy Mount"), who, in addition to his numerous writings, had no little influence on the relations of Byzantium and Georgia.

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● 177 As so often happens in life, the incidental doings of these holy men were far more important than their lives' works in copying and dogmatizing. The Georgian monasteries abroad became universities for the youth of Georgia, and in their travels they absorbed the knowledge of the Classic philosophers who had passing fashions in Byzantium, and they learnt the ways and the practical achievements of the great Mediterranean world. By contrary, the renown of the Georgian monasteries in the orthodox Byzantine Empire impressed the rulers of the West with the signal virtues of the Georgian nation, and the imposing theologians from Athos visited the capital as the diplomatic and, not infrequently, the matrimonial agents of the Georgian kings. Again, the returning studious youth, and the divines who came back to Georgia to forage among the wealthy and uneasy-minded, carried with them admiration for and desire to emulate the magnificent intellectual organization of the Byzantine Church. In Georgia the monastic system had been developing from early times. Grigol Khandzteli, in the ninth century, had founded a group of monasteries along the Chorokhi, and the excellent educational system which he introduced at Khandzti, Shatberdi and Tbeti was copied and encouraged by the Georgian kings, to the extent that in the eleventh century universities were in being at Gelati in Imereti, and at Alaverdi and Gremi in Kakheti.

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776 The vast literary output of the monks, in Georgia and abroad, is of little interest except to the specialist and to the student of illumination and book-making. It is only the "Lives" of Georgian Saints which have a certain historical interest and their own originality, in that the subject-matter is new. These "Lives" include those of Prince Murvano (St. Peter of Iberia); St. Nino, the Illuminator of Georgia; Saints Ioanné and Evthimé; St. Grigol Khandzteli; St. Abo; and St. Giorgi Mtatzmindeli. Of these, the *Life of St. Abo*, who lived in the eighth century, is by far the most entertaining. St. Abo was originally a perfumer's boy in Baghdad. He met with Nersé, the son of Adarnasé Kuropalates of Kartli, who was held prisoner in Baghdad, and accompanying the prince back to Georgia, was converted to the Christian faith. Later Nersé was involved in war with the Arabs, and accompanied by Abo, fled to Osseti and then into the land of the Khazars. After many adventures, they found their way to

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538 the *Amiran-Darejaniani* of Moses Khoneli (from the village of Khoni in Imereti). The *Amiran-Darejaniani* is a collection of heroic tales centring round the legendary figure of Amiran, and rich in the lore of the peasants. The poem contains many indications of Persian influence and it is imbued with much pre-Christian and pre-Muslim fantasy and tradition. It throws an interesting light on the state of geographical knowledge in Georgia, for it includes characters who come from the Yemen, Egypt, Astarabad, India, Basra, Bahrein, Ghazni, China and Khazaria.

The second of the great poems *Visraminiani* or *Visramiani* (the "Loves of Vis and Ramin") is based on an old Pehlevi tale which was current in contemporary Persia. Wardrop is of opinion that "it may have had a good deal to do with that development of European romanticism which finds utterance in the songs of the Minnesinger, the lays of the Troubadours, and the letters of Heloise . . ." and he refers to the fact that "a comparison has been drawn between the Persian version and Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan and Isolt*".¹

Visramiani, like *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, is a tale of fantastic romance, and it is full of the exaggerated metaphor and erotic sentimentality of the great Persian poems. Yet there is a gay and lilting strain throughout which carries the reader easily through the burdened passages. Throughout the poem there is a knowledge of human nature, a joy in the natural beauty of life, a brave and light yet sad philosophy, which is characteristic of all of the great Georgian poets, and which makes the reading of them at once pleasing to the taste and salutary to the spirit.

The poet gives descriptions, which are instinct with knowledge of his fellows:

"Among these was a renowned, generous, wise-minded man, complete in manhood, fearless, prudent, cheerful, faultless in speech, brave and a seeker after wisdom, perfect in all virtues, exquisite; he was right cunning in leechcraft; a lover of all men, a man of God, and he was lord of a great land. Besides all these virtues he was a seeker after strange stories and poetry."²

And here is the account of a beautiful lady:

"Now she has grown up with much self-will, and like a falcon's fledgling begins to soar upward. I fear that her flight will be so high that this nest will no longer content her and she will go away-somewhere to seek her peers. Peerlessness and solitude go ill together.

¹ Wardrop, *Visramiani*, "Introduction," p. 7.

² I follow Sir O. Wardrop's excellent version.

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439 of the Georgian Church with Rome. By the end of the
 648 thirteenth century Latin influence in Georgia was strong,
 and growing. As early as the time of Marco Polo, Genoese
 merchants were navigating and trading across the Caspian,¹
 and in the first decade of the fourteenth century the Italian
 monks William of Chiero and Matthew of Chieti were working
 in Tiflis.

648 The Bank of St. George and the Vatican, not always in
 793 unison, supplemented each the other's efforts in the further-
 ● 177 ance of Latin influence. In 1316, the *Officium Gazaria* was
 organizing the administration of Caffa; and two years later
 the city became the See of a Roman Catholic Archbishop,
 whose diocese comprised the whole area from Varna to Saray
 on the Volga, and from the Black Sea to the Russian duke-
 doms.² In 1314, the Genoese obtained their first treaty from
 Alexios II of Trebizond; in 1321, John XXII addressed a
 letter to King Giorgi Brtsqinwalé urging the union of the
 Georgian Church with Rome, and seven years later John of
 Florence arrived in Tiflis as first Roman Catholic Bishop, and
 busied himself in translating Latin ecclesiastical texts into
 Georgian.³

During the period between the establishment of Mongol
 power and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, the
 contact between Georgia and the states of Western Chris-
 tendom must have been continuous. As early as 1330, there
 was an English Roman Catholic bishop, Peter Gerald, at
 Sukhum, whom we find lamenting that his flock were being
 sold as slaves to the Saracens without his being able to check
 the traffic;⁴ and Germans, Italians and Frenchmen succeeded
 each other in the See of Tiflis. In 1441, a Georgian bishop
 was in attendance at the Ecumenical Council of Florence;
 and in 1461, Georgian and Trapezuntine ambassadors, escorted
 by Ludovico of Bologna, the Papal Legate in the East, were
 present at the coronation of Louis XI.⁵ In 1496, the Borgia
 Pope Alexander VI was writing to thank Constantine III of
 Kartli for his congratulations on the capture of Granada
 from "the Agarians";⁶ and there is a letter extant which
 shows that Constantine sent an ambassador by way of Poland
 and Lithuania with a gift for Isabella of Castile, of nineteen

¹ Polo, Yule's ed., I, 32.

² W. Bartold, Article "Kafa" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

³ Tamarati, *Histoire de l'Eglise Géorgienne*, pp. 403 et seq.

⁴ Heyd, II, 192, quoting Raynaldi, *Ann. eccl.* ed. an. 1330, No. 57.

⁵ Tamarati, 109.

⁶ *Ibid.*

DOG-DAYS OF THE GEORGIANS

pieces of embroidered brocades of Yezd, fourteen *mithkals* of large pearls and eighteen panthers' skins.¹

The writings of Latin travellers and diplomatic agents during the two centuries of Latin activity in the Black Sea reflect the rapid decay of social conditions in Georgia. The earlier travellers write in terms of admiration. Marco Polo's information on Georgia refers to the third quarter of the thirteenth century, to the time of King Dmitri Tavadadébuli. The Georgians in those days held a good name. They were "*very handsome, capital archers, and most valiant soldiers*".² Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, a little more than a century later, is little less favourable in his brief reference to the Georgians. He regards them as "a fine race of men"; and he speaks with admiration of the King, Giorgi VII, the hero of the Georgian struggle against Timur.

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century the picture is a very different one. Weakened by the ravages of the Black Death and the invasions of Timur, Georgia had, in the middle of the century, been stricken by civil war and by the raids of the Turkoman masters of Iran and Eastern Anatolia. Pontic Christendom was in extremity, and the last ambassadors of Georgia, Trebizond, and Byzantium had made their vain approaches to the courts of Europe. The Turks had Constantinople in 1453, and while Georgian and Trapezuntine ambassadors were attending the levées of the French and the Burgundian monarchs, the Sultan marched to Trebizond. Ludovico of Bologna, that errant, rather sinister Legate in the East, had been entraining many years a plan for uniting the contentious Georgian dynasts with Uzun-Hassan, the Turkoman tyrant in Tabriz, and with the frightened Greeks of Trebizond, against the Ottoman Sultan. Too late, the Venetian Signory made an urgent effort to implement the Legate's plan. Three agents, Josaphat Barbaro, Ambrogio Contarini and Caterino Zeno—the last a relative of Uzun-Hassan's Comnenian wife—were sent to the East, and between the years 1471 and 1474 they were travelling and intriguing in Persia and Georgia. Constantinople and Trebizond were already lost; and while Contarini was waiting in Fasso for a ship to take him to Caffa, he heard that that city had fallen to

¹ The *mithkal*, a Persian weight, was equivalent to 10 ounces.

² Brosset, *H. de la G.*, I, 409. The difficulty which Brosset found in the synchronization of the date 1465 is removed, in view of the evidence published by Tamarati in the letter of Alexander VI. The date of Constantine's letter to Isabella would be 1495 and not 1465.

³ Polo (Yule), I, 50.

DOG-DAYS OF THE GEORGIANS

ness and as good and thin-shaled as are our filberts. Of these are 439 carried yearly the quantity of 4,000 camells laden".¹

Tolochanov has some interesting details on the habits and 291 ways of life of the Imerians. They dressed generally in the 177 Turkish or Persian fashion, although they wore their own local costumes which consisted of a sort of long *caftans* with short sleeves. The high-heeled shoes noted by the Venetians were still in use, although Turkish slippers were much worn and the poorer classes favoured sandals. They wore blouses and shirts of all colours except white, and made generally of silk. All classes carried swords and sabres mostly of Persian or German make which they wore even in church. They wore leather belts ornamented with gold and silver, and all carried *kinjals* (the long thin straight Caucasian daggers). For fighting the bow was still in use, but muskets 411 and pistols were common. The most prized horses were the Argamak stallions of Kabardán breed.²

The Georgian dynasts even in the dog-days of the Mussul-511 man hegemony maintained a degree of wealth and enjoyed 565 a state of luxury which was in strange contrast to the poverty and misery in which their subjects wallowed all around them. This contrast always has been, and still is, characteristic of Eastern cultures, and for that matter the phenomenon is by no means confined either to the east or to the centuries preceding the Industrial Revolution.

It would be interesting to devote a separate work to the consideration of how the failure to use specie for its proper 511 function of facilitating the circulation of the products of the 125x world has—as a result of the interplay of the instincts for accumulation and ostentation—checked the full use of the natural wealth of the earth by the people living on it. Tolochanov, during his audience of King Taymurazi in his manor in Radsha, and of King Alexander in the palace at Kutais, must have seen before his eyes a very large part of the movable and unusable wealth of Georgia of the seventeenth century. King Taymurazi, although his fortunes had sunk considerably lower than they were when Mishetski visited him ten years before, was living in no little luxury, surrounded by a numerous retinue and making a display of wealth which excited the admiration of an ambassador accustomed to the splendours of the Muscovite court. Taymurazi was a vigorous patriot and one of the most enlightened men of his day. His country was in enemy occupation, desolate and despoiled. And we

¹ Hakluyt's Voyages, p. 447.

² Polievskov, Tselchikow, pp. 110 et seq.

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Shoes and in a word in all things most necessary for Man's use. There were all sorts of Grocery and Apothecary's Ware, Spices, Perfumes, Drugs and all manner of Ointments. So that the vessel seemed to be a little Town, where everything was to be had."¹

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Almost all the foreign trade was transacted by barter, and both Chardin and Pitton de Tournefort found that the people preferred to be paid for goods in stuffs and trinkets rather than in currency.

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The long period of perpetual contact, both commercial and political, with their powerful Mussulman neighbours had a profound effect on the peoples of the Caucasus. The more highly civilized Georgians and Armenians, strong in the antique traditions of East Christian culture, were outwardly affected in modes and habits and some ways of thought; the peoples of the mountains, who had not by the fifteenth century emerged from the tribal state, forgot their thin Christianity and became Muslim in culture as well as in outward fashion. Not only did Islam penetrate the remoter valleys of Circassia, but it became the religion of the relatively civilized Meskhians and Abkhaz.²

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The easy religious casuistry of the Georgian princes was natural to them as well as convenient to their political interests. In the seventeenth century the old medieval culture of Christendom, which had flourished in the Kingdom of Georgia, was half-forgotten, and it was only the more sensitive spirits who were prepared still to make sacrifices in the memory of its tradition. The new architecture of Tiflis, in the Mukhranian days, was altogether in the Muslim style;

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dress, manners, furnishing, were Persian. The position of women was also affected and Chardin noted a tendency, since the Persian rule began in Tiflis, towards the seclusion of women. They went veiled in the streets, while in the country districts, where there were no Mussulmans, they still adhered to the Christian custom.³

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The travellers of the seventeenth century are none too generous in their appraisal of the Georgian character. Chardin has a long diatribe on the Georgians, and he condemns their immorality, their drunkenness, their knavery and their arrogance. But even he admits, by contrary, that "*they are Civil and Courteous and more than that, they are Grave and Moderate*".⁴

¹ Chardin, p. 75.

² For the progress of Islam in Samtskhé during the seventeenth century, see Wakhushti, *Histoire de Samtskhé*, in Brosset, *Fl. de la G.*, II, 1, 232-3.

³ Chardin, p. 226.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

THE GEORGIAN ALPHABET

TRANSLITERATION, PRONUNCIATION, AND CLASSIFICATION OF GEORGIAN SPEECH-SOUNDS

By A. GUGUSHVILI

212. **G**EOrgIANS possess two alphabets, namely, the *Khutsuri*—sacerdotal or ecclesiastical, and the *Mkhedruli*—military or secular.¹

Formerly, the *Khutsuri* alphabet, as the name indicates, was used in ecclesiastical texts, and the *Mkhedruli* in secular literature,² but in modern usage the *Mkhedruli* prevails over the *Khutsuri* alphabet.

Khutsuri script has two forms: *aso-mi'auruli* majuscule, and *nuskhuri* minuscule; while *Mkhedruli* script has only one form: minuscule (if handwritten script is not taken into consideration).

Until the beginning of the eleventh century the ancient literary Georgian language was written entirely in sacerdotal characters, the majuscule form of the alphabet being almost exclusively used up to the beginning of the tenth century, but later this was gradually displaced by the minuscule form.

- [177] The sacerdotal alphabet, in both its majuscule and minuscule form, is, according to Marr, generally a product of the Georgian Christian culture, which arose with the adoption of Christianity and which represented first the religious and then also the social interests of Georgian Christian society.

The pre-Christian alphabet, i.e. the alphabet that served the cultural interests of Georgian pagan society, has not come down to us. In Marr's opinion, the military or knights' alphabet is probably a survival of this one, developed further in secular military circles, and influenced by the sacerdotal alphabet while having, in its turn, a reciprocal influence on the latter alphabet in the formation of its minuscule type.³

It is regretted that it is not possible to give in the Table the sacerdotal alphabet side by side with the military one. After an extensive inquiry, no printer was found who possessed the fount of

¹ *Khutsuri*, an adjective, is derived from *Khutsesi* (*Khutsays*)—*sacerdos*, -*otis*, a priest. *Mkhedruli*, an adjective, is derived from *Mkhedari*—a horseman, a cavalier, a knight. The *Khutsuri*, therefore, may also be called the "priestly" or "priests' hand", the *Mkhedruli*, the "knightly" or "knights' hand".

² The written language of Georgia, according to Marr, developed in the cultured section of the Georgian army (consisting by preference of cavalrymen), in circles of distinguished warrior-knights.

[113] ³ N. Marr, *A Grammar of the Ancient Georgian Literary Language* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1925, p. 2.

Formation of Communities

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The practice of the custom of adoption¹ in its various forms¹¹⁴ shows the error of the views of many investigators who regard the mountaineers of the Caucasus, living remote from other peoples, as illustrating the evolutionary principle of social development; and who regard the communities of the Highlanders of the Caucasus as social organizations in their "embryonic state," thus conserved by their seclusion and representing "museums" of the past which are patiently awaiting the investigations of learned anthropologists and ethnologists. For example, E. D. Morgan expresses his views in a work read before the British Asiatic Society on March 19, 1888, and later printed in complete form in the Journal of the Society. Mr. Morgan's work is based on the well-known work of Professor M. Kovalevsky dealing with the customary law among the Ossets of the Caucasus, a work which was written in Russian and later edited in French translation.⁸⁰ Expounding his views, Morgan writes:⁸¹ "In the highlands of the Caucasus, as in other mountainous regions, remnants of Aryan tribes have found it possible to subsist, though not in large numbers, preserving their independence and perpetuating customs and traditions in the highest degree interesting to the historian and philosopher. To these reference must be made if we would supply the missing link in the history of civilization, to these we should turn in order to trace the earliest dawn of juridical notions—the embryology of law."

Taking into consideration the views just cited, and turning to¹¹⁴ the conditions as they really exist in the Caucasus, we see from [408] the different methods of adoption² and the heterogeneity of physical [173] traits and origin, as above stated, that the social groups among the Georgian Highlanders were not secluded and closed to the stranger. The social units, whether separate communities or the whole people, are not "museums" with old, unchanging relics, but on the contrary represent, as Professor A. M. Ladishevski remarks in his work dealing with the social organization of the Circassians,⁸² "laboratories" where the active work of change and transformation

⁸⁰ Kovalevsky, b.

⁸¹ Morgan: 364-5.

⁸² Ladishevski.

¹ [see pp 15-16, cat. 116 - Analyst]

114 is going on. Life in the illiterate communities as in the civilized
177 societies is not static but dynamic; only the tempo, the speed of
change, is different—slow, hard to notice in the majority of cases
in the former group, and more prompt and manifest in the latter.
Even in the most secluded glacier regions of the Caucasus the people
do not live in complete isolation but are in contact with other
communities and peoples, creating the above-mentioned heterogeneity
of physical traits and the composition of the social organization.
But in spite of all this the unity of the social group among the
Georgian Highlanders is unshaken and solidly established, thanks
to the religious beliefs of the people and their conviction of the
existence of spirits and a life beyond the grave as manifested in
the cult of the dead. These are factors which replace the lack of
real blood relationship and keep firmly together the different component
parts as one homogeneous unit.

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301 In Chechnia and N. W. Dagestan head ornaments are found consisting of a band on top of the head with a concatenation of large metal or glass rings hanging down from it on both sides. As to the hairdo, the Georgian women
C.
G.
302 have the hair hanging down loose over the back and shoulders or in braids around the head. Only on the Black Sea coast do they wear it hanging down in long braids. This is also the usual way in the Northern Caucasus. The Tush girls wear the hair in four braids which are cut off when they marry; the latter custom occurs also sporadically in Dagestan.

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291 It must be emphasized that the traditional costume has in most cases partly or
177 wholly given way to the general European type of dress, and is worn only on holidays and special occasions such as weddings and other celebrations.

FOLK RELIGION

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The major religions in the Caucasus are Christianity (Georgians except Adzhar and Ingilo; Armenians except Hemshily; Ossetes except Digor; Udi) and Islam (all the rest, except the Mountain Jews and Yezid). But many traces of the older pagan religious view remain. Among the mountaineers in the N. W. Caucasus Islam was introduced comparatively recently (seventeenth century), and in many cases reached only the upper classes. In Dagestan, with its stronger Islamic tradition, the ancient beliefs have disappeared to a much larger extent. In Georgia, Christianity has absorbed many pagan features, and among the Kartvelian mountaineers it was rather paganism that adopted certain outward characteristics of Christianity. In the N. W. Caucasus, the pre-Islamic pagan religion preserved curious vestiges of Christianity which had been introduced from Georgia in the time of queen Tamar, and perhaps even earlier. Here and there in the Caucasus there are remains of the influence of Zoroastrianism.

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The old Caucasian religion was closely connected with family and sib organization. It centered around the house-hearth, above which hung the cooking pot, suspended from an iron chain (Georg. sak'ide (be)li), which had a symbolic value and was believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. It could not

177.87

GEORGIANS

planning without much assistance from labour drawn from the outside. ^{Ge.} Nevertheless racial intermixture in general and the immigration of ⁴⁶⁴ Russians in particular increased even in Georgia under the Soviet ¹⁶² régime. In 1926 there had been but 3.4 per cent Russians in the country against 8.9 per cent in 1939. On the other hand the percentage of Georgians dropped between the 1926 and 1939 census from 71.5 per cent to 61.4 per cent.

Russian cultural influence in Georgia is, however, much stronger than ^{Ge.} the percentage of Russians in Georgia's population indicates. In 1947 ^{177.87} there were 300 Russian secondary schools in Georgia out of 800 alto- ⁸⁷¹ together. Kupradze, the Minister of Education of the Georgian S.S.R., himself admitted that more than half of the pupils in Russian schools were non-Russians ⁸⁸.

It must be noted in this connection that the standard of education in ^{S.U.} Georgia is higher than in any other Soviet Republic, including the ³⁷¹ R.S.F.S.R. Thus in 1939 Georgia had, for every 1,000 inhabitants, 113.4 persons with secondary education and 12.2 persons with higher education. In the Russian Federation, on the eve of the Second World War only 76.8 per 1,000 had secondary education and only 6.5 per 1,000 had higher education. Georgia has also introduced eleven-year secondary education instead of the ten-year school existing everywhere else in the Soviet Union. This comparatively high educational level, combined with ^{Ge.} a good knowledge of Russian, has enabled the Georgians to play a not ⁵⁵⁵ unimportant part in the Soviet civil service and in the bureaucratic machinery of the party.

GREATER GEORGIA

During the war the Georgians made a greater contribution to the defence ^{S.U.} of the U.S.S.R. than most non-Russian peoples. They played an out- ⁷⁰¹ standing part in preventing the Germans from penetrating into Trans- ⁵⁶³ caucasia. Fighting mostly in separate Georgian regiments and under ^{Ge.} Georgian officers they held up the German advance at the state borders ⁷⁰³ of Georgia. It was thus a legitimate symbolical recognition of the Georgian war effort that a Georgian sergeant was allowed to hoist the flag of victory over the Berlin Reichstag together with a Russian Red Army man. ²⁷

The Soviet Government had every interest in advertising the war effort ^{S.U.} of the Georgians, for Moscow wanted to tell the world that here was ⁵⁶³ a small people who had fought Hitler most heroically. This people ⁶⁴⁸ must be rewarded at the expense of a neighbour state which had been ²⁰⁸ neutral throughout the war. In other words, Georgia was to be switched into the diplomatic offensive which the Soviet Government launched against Turkey immediately after the end of the Second World War.